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Architectural Interior as Phenomenological Matrix

Synergies and readings between architectural design and principles of Sensitive

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Synopsis

Trough the concepts of experience and sensitivity, Interior architecture and Phenomenology enable a mutual dialogue that suggests different interpretations. The need for a multidisciplinary approach to knowledge lies in the fact that these two disciplines meet and generate a further critical reading of the surrounding world. This contribution, divided into four sections, presents the points on which a critical and creative pedagogical mode of the architectural project is based. After addressing, in a historical-theoretical context, the fundamental links between the methodological approach of human sciences and the methodological approach of the architectural project, the paper argues our interest in interior architecture and our focus on a coincidence that is intertwined with the element of sensitivity. We afterwards focus on the idea of haptic space as an example of a project that springs from a creative choice and not from an abstract rule, to end with some pedagogical applications.

Key words: Interiors, Phenomenology, Sensibility, Multidisciplinary.

In recent decades, the mutual interest between Architecture and Philosophy has manifested in many ways: on a side, the philosophers' interest for architecture focused on concretizing the theoretical aspects that respond to concrete and necessary needs; on the other, architecture seeks the philosophy of answers for an epistemological refoundation following the crisis of the Modern Movement. These two first points represent a reciprocal and synergic relationship between two doctrines that are increasingly combined both in a theoretical context and in a pragmatic one. The multidisciplinary approach, which this study wants to highlight, is the basis to constitute a critical and creative pedagogical mode that is a way to further experiment the discipline of human sciences through the strong influence of architecture.

1. Architecture and Humanities

In a first historical-theoretical framework, the fundamental and historical steps of the synergy and the multidisciplinary exchange of a critical dimension that encompasses the discipline of architecture and philosophy are highlighted by the fundamental characteristics of the project structure as a syntagm for the methodological approach of human Sciences. Design is necessarily influenced by the fundamental sign of utility and tectonics that, coming from a surrounding reality, influence the architect in the freedom of lateral thought and of the different variables involved in the design processes. This means that even though the fundamental principles of the discipline are at the basis, there will always be the possibility to change the idea of the rules themselves by means of a gesture. This strong correspondence to the reality assumed by Architecture offers us a very interesting reading of the area of Philosophy that includes Phenomenology, that is, the doctrine that deals with the phenomenon as a surrounding reality.

2. Attitudes of the Interior

Looking in this way at the synergy between architecture and philosophy, it is surely possible to trace the contribution of Architecture tout court to phenomenological thought. But above all, we would like to do so also with Interior Architecture: through the concepts of experience and sensitivity, it epistemologically corresponds to the fundamental concepts of Phenomenology which, as coined by the Wolfian school, is the description of what appears and therefore of what exists.

Interior architecture addresses the radical nature of architectural space. Architecture is thus understood as an unitary chain in which internal and external converge. Deeply investigating the nature of the spaces, interior architecture defines and verifies in them the meaning of a building. Architecture is therefore characterized by the scale and the depth of a look that binds the shape of spaces and the design of their equipment to the interpretation of the primary and cultural needs and the gestures of the recipients. Architectural space becomes habitable thanks to a continuous connection between the definition of the forms and the interaction of them with the people they are destined to. The needs and the traces expressed by the context are therefore placed at the root of the project, which has a debit of meaning towards. The coincidence with the sensitivity, combined with the instance of reality, brings us back to the field of Husserl's phenomenology, who, in the Logical Investigations, introduces the basic meanings of the phenomenon as a fact and

as an event of reality. Phenomena are inserted, with the subjects, in the space-time world and this is why the Phenomenology is understood as a science of essences. Heidegger used the phenomenological research as a method for his ontology, through which he carried out his philosophical investigation. Likewise, J.P. Sartre and Merleau-Ponty understood Phenomenology as a method for analyzing what manifests itself. The relationship between appearance and being, in phenomenological ontology, can be variously defined or analyzed, and does not model itself on the relationship of appearance and reality but suggests its various nuances.

3. Haptic Space and Design

This approach supports a method that records the social and cultural changes that the design of living spaces must take into account to oppose self-referentiality and indifference to the human scale. Being both physical and cultural, it represents a reason for the society to which the contemporary project is addressed for being extraneous and reject a part of it. These reflections point towards a method according to which it is impossible to believe that the basic principle of architecture is limited to a fixed vocabulary of forms, materials and strategies, while it is more a mobile one capable of renewing itself in every work: the phenomenological approach to architecture is opposed to its de-realization, trying to bring it back to what makes it different: matter, construction, space, immaterial qualities produced by materiality. Finally, to restore the value of an idea of haptic space also stresses the placing of the void, a constitutive element of the architectural work, as a positive value suitable for the unfolding of everyday experience. All this aims at defining a methodological approach proper of the discipline of interior architecture and links it to the roots of the architectural project and the phenomenological matrix.

4. A Sensible Multidisciplinarity

This awareness is the base of didactic and research experiences where, at different levels, the synergy between design and humanist knowledge takes place and that, in different ways, saw our participation.

The multidisciplinary approach to a reading of what can be sensed is the key to define the early relationships between “tekton” and “habitus”. Phenomenology, moreover, opens to developing research and study processes that are already in place in Europe. Our concrete testimony comes from an historical framework that includes the educational project at the base of the three years degree course in Architecture and Design held at the University of Naples “Federico II” from 2004 to 2010. The course included classes such as Aesthetics and Philosophy of Languages that should be part of the fundamental education of any designer, and, as

in many other European universities, are currently part of the Milan Polytechnic Department of Design courses. These disciplines are the tool to define an approach to the project that shows a hermeneutic relationship among the different elements and the different phases.

The results of the Doctorate in Architectural Interior Philosophy at the University of Naples, since 2011, have powered a continuous and peculiar reflection

upon the identity, disciplinary boundaries and research methods that belong to the design of interiors, in a relationship with the everchanging scenarios and problems of contemporary ages.

Pointing out the characteristics of this kind of relationship helps defining the framework of a pedagogical approach that opens to collaboration among the different disciplines. These subjects happen to be no longer consigned to enclosed scientific sectors but rather fluid and remodulated by means of an actualization of knowledge.

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Biography

Gioconda Cafiero. Architect, he teaches Interior Architecture and Exhibit design at the Department of Architecture of the University of Naples "Federico II". PhD in Interior Architecture at the Politecnico of Milan, he focused his teaching and research activity on the small scale of architecture, on the different ways of living the architectural interior, from the domestic space to the exhibit design, in which he participates at competitions and conferences, seminars and exhibitions, and publishes monographs, essays and articles, in Italy and abroad. He also teaches in Ph.D. course in Philosophy of the Architectural Interior at the University of Naples "Federico II". Among her publications: "Il progetto di Allestimento. Esposizione e comunicazione", Ed. B. di M., Naples 1999, "Il valore dell'interno tra contemplazione e partecipazione", Ed. B. di M., Naples 2002, "Museografia. Riflessioni sulla metodologia e l'identità disciplinare", E.S.I., Napoli 2011 and "La Biblioteca. Uno spazio che nasce da un arredo", E.S.I. Napoli 2012.

Aurosa Alison. PhD in Philosophy (Université Jean Moulin Lyon 3 - University of Naples "The Oriental"). Starting from a reactivation of the thought of Gaston Bachelard through the epistemological and the poetic field, she focused in particular the scope of a philosophy of space through the phenomenological aspect of modern and contemporary architecture. She currently collaborates with the Ph.D. in

« Filosofia dell'interno Architettonico » of the Faculty of Architecture and of the Faculty of Humans Sciences of the Federico II University of Naples she and collaborates with the Course in Aesthetics of Design at the Politecnico of Milano.

Among his main publications: 2014 The Gaston Bachelard Space between science and poetry, (Philosophical Studies, Bibliopolis, No. XXXV); 2017 A. Alison, L'inférence existentielle du rond dans la fonction de l'habiter, Cahiers Gaston Bachelard n ° 15. For the Diogene Edizioni she edited in 2017 the volume « Per una Filosofia dell'interno architettonico ».